

## **Knock Knock Knock** by DeutchRemy

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**Summary:**

A man with a stomach bug and a needy pre-teen. Rated for language and...bodily functions. Realistic cabin life. Please review!

# 1. Chapter 1

## Author's Note:

I'd like to use this opportunity to make a plea for more people to write daughter El & daddy Hop stories. Pretty please? Don't make me sad...

Thank you. Good night and good luck.

Knock knock knock. "Hop?"

"Yeah?"

"okay?"

"Yeah, kid, I'm alright. Just a messed up stomach is all."

"okay..."

I hunch over on the toilet as another spasm seizes my intestines.

Jesus. This can't be from the enchiladas I had for lunch at work. This is a bug. I've been perched on the throne for forty five minutes now and the shit just keeps coming.

Another spasm overtakes me, followed by a chill, but I think it's from the pain and not a fever.

Twenty minutes pass and there's another knock on the door and a soft voice from the other side.

"Hop?"

"Yeah, hon, I'm okay."

"sure?" She sounds anxious now.

"Yeah, I'm sure."

"sick...?"

“Just a little touch of something, kiddo. I’m alright. Go watch some TV, okay?”

There’s a pause before she says “okay...” and the sound of bare feet on hardwood tells me she’s retreated to the sofa.

Five more minutes and the worst seems to be over. I wipe, flush, and opt for a quick shower to get totally clean. Right as I step out my gut gurgles again.

Fucking shit.

I sit for another half hour.

Knock knock knock.

“I’m fine, El. Go back to the couch.”

“when?”

“I’ll be out soon, kid. Go on.”

“but...”

“No butts. You can even have an Eggo if you promise to leave me alone.”

As if there’s anything I could do to stop her from having an Eggo while I’m stuck on the fucking toilet. Hell, she could eat an entire box of Eggos if she was so inclined.

She says nothing but I hear her feet once again pattering away on the hardwood.

Ten minutes later and I’m confident I’m finished. I flush and hop back in the shower.

Over the running water I hear a knock on the door. Jesus, not again.

“El, I’m fine, okay? I’m in the shower. I’ll be out in five minutes.”

“have to pee...”

“You’re gonna have to wait, kid. I’m in the shower.” And I will be goddamned if I let her sit on that toilet before I disinfect it. I might be able to handle an intestinal bug but a kid with no immune system could get dehydrated very quickly. I experienced that with Sarah when the chemo gave her diarrhea.

“have to go bad.” She’s whining now.

“No whining. I know you can hold it. I’ll be out in five minutes, then I need to clean the toilet, then you can potty.”

Potty. Sometimes I forget that this kid isn’t five.

The doorknob rattles and that’s when I realize I didn’t lock it. Why would it? The kid might prefer to leave the door open a crack when she’s in here, but she knows I like it shut. Doesn’t she?

“El! El, do not open that door!” I will be goddamned if I let her put her butt on that filthy, germly toilet seat. I stumble out of the shower in hopes I can lock the door before she gets it open. “I need to disinfect that seat bef -“

Annnnnd I’m too late. The door creaks open. I snag a towel from the rack but the look of confusion on the girl’s face is enough to tell me she already saw. Her head is tilted to the side like a curious dog.

Play it cool, Hop.

“El.” I say sternly, towel firmly in place around my hips. “You need to go back to the couch and watch TV. You can’t use the toilet yet.” I place my hands on her shoulders and spin her around gently. “Do as I say.”

“but have to pee.” She’s whining again.

Jesus Christ. Deep breath, Hop.

“Okay. Give me three minutes.”

The girl does the pee dance outside the bathroom as I yank a bottle of bleach out from under the sink. I dump a bunch into the toilet bowl and scrub it around with the brush before splashing some onto the

seat and wiping it around with a washcloth, which gets tossed in the trash immediately after.

Once I'm satisfied that the toilet is clean and that there's no wet bleach left on the seat to burn her skin, I do a quick clean of the sink handles and basin.

"Okay." I say as I exit the bathroom. "It's all clean. Now get in there before you wet your pants."

While she's occupied I do a quick change of clothes, rehydrate with a tall glass of Coke, and sit on the couch to wonder what in the hell just happened.

## 2. Chapter 2

“what is it?”

“Hmm? What’s what?”

“thing. down here.” She’s pointing at something on her body but she’s hidden by the table so I can’t see what she’s indicating.

“What? Kid, I can’t see what you’re pointing at.”

“here!” She says, louder this time. Then, “privacy.”

I look under the table to find her pointing at her crotch. Oh. Ohhhhhhh...

Maybe if I play dumb I can weasel my way out of explaining the difference between girls and boys during breakfast.

“Yep, those are your private parts.”

“no! yours!”

Oh Jeez.

Her exasperation doesn’t last long, though, because she begins to giggle.

“looks funny.”

Okay, now this would be adorable if she wasn’t talking about my junk. Not that I’m offended or anything but it’s just not appropriate for a little girl to even be thinking about...that.

But I play it cool. I’m not gonna be the one to make the situation awkward. Well, more awkward than it already is. Just explain to her like you explained it to Sarah all those years ago when she walked in on you in the bathroom and pointed and started laughing. My five year old had had a love for digging up earthworms in the backyard, and for the next week had shouted at anybody who would listen about “daddy’s big worm!”

Jesus. That was a mortifying week.

“Yeah it does look kinda funny, huh?”

“yes. different.”

“Good vocabulary word. And yeah, it’s different from yours.”

“why?”

“Why is it different?”

She nods.

“Well, because boys and girls have different parts.”

“why?”

“Well, because when those boys and girls grow up into men and women those parts make it so they can make babies.”

“make babies?” The look of confusion on her face is one for the books. “...that’s how mama got me?”

“Yeah, that’s how your mama got you. She made you with your daddy.”

“papa?”

“Yes - I mean no! Not that papa. Different papa.”

Now she looks utterly, completely befuddled, as though she’s trying to turn the information over and over in her head. She starts playing with her napkin.

“what...is it called?”

“You mean the boy part?”

She nods.

“It’s called a penis.”

The kid bursts out laughing.

“funny name!”

Her laugh is contagious and so rare to hear that I can’t help but join her.

“Yeah it does sound kind of funny, huh?”

“very funny!”

“And you remember what your part is called, right?”

“no.”

“Girls have a vagina.”

“also funny but not as funny.”

Jesus. So a talk about body parts is what gets this kid to speak in almost-full sentences.

“Yeah, not as funny.”

“mike has one?”

I clear my throat.

“Yep, Mike has a penis, kiddo. All those little friends of yours have one. Because they’re boys.”

“joyce doesn’t have one.”

“No, Joyce is a girl, like you, so she has a vagina.” Never in his life did I think I’d be talking to a 12-year-old girl about Joyce Byers’ vagina.

“okay.” She resumes eating her waffles, then, “feel better? tummy?”

“Much better, kid. Much, much better. I guess it was my spicy lunch after all.”

“good.”



I stand up and set my plate in the sink. “But next time...” I swoop down and tickle the kid’s belly with both hands, eliciting a squeal and more laughter, “Let a man poop in peace, yeah?”

“okay!” She keeps giggling, and for a moment I’m transported back in time, tickling a little blonde girl in a dress instead of a curly-headed brunette in overalls.

### 3. Chapter 3

#### Summary for the Chapter:

It's El's turn to get sick.

I almost forgot what it's like to be up all night with a sick kid. Almost.

As it turns out, I did have a stomach bug the other day and wasn't simply suffering the effects of the spicy lunch I shared with my deputies. El inevitably caught it, and as kids love to do, she waited until 1AM to actually get sick.

And the memories rush back. It's all so similar...

The tap on my shoulder and my bleary eyes trying to make out El's figure in the darkness of the cabin. Her miserable-sounding "Hop" eerily similar to Sarah's "Dad" to my sleep-muddled brain.

The instinctual backs of my fingers to her forehead and finding her skin hot to the touch.

Her practically vibrating in place from chills and whining that her tummy feels funny but not having the words to describe what funny feels like.

It's all so similar...

The tossing and turning on the couch as the poor girl tries and fails to get comfortable, having made it clear she doesn't want to return to her room.

Sitting up with her, trying to find something for her to watch on TV at this hour that's not snow.

The severe diarrhea. Like Sarah during the worst of her chemo.

The struggle to get liquids into her and the nagging fear at the back of my throat about what I'll do if I can't keep her hydrated.

El's sniffles every time she leaves the bathroom because each visit is getting more and more painful.

The near-miss that prompts me to fold up several towels underneath her on the couch.

Her literal shaking chills and the chattering of her teeth, despite the five blankets I've piled on top of her.

Tylenol.

Then the kicking off of every blanket when the pills kick in and she soaks the towels in sweat.

Sitting on the floor outside the bathroom and reading to her from her favorite book every time she has to go, which is becoming alarmingly frequent. Trying to focus on keeping the waver out of my voice every time I hear her sniffle.

It's all so similar...

Feeling the warmth of her as she melts into my side once she's out of the bathroom and we're continuing the book on the couch.

Rubbing her belly, wishing my hand could magically absorb all of her discomfort and give it back to me. I'd gladly have diarrhea for a month if it meant she could be spared a day of it.

A tiny shiver through her body, and my practiced wary glance at the digital clock on the television set.

Blankets back on, more pills in.

Her simply smelling the Pepto and instantly throwing up the meager amount of de-fizzed Sprite that I'd managed to get into her belly.

Attempting to coax some dry toast into her, despite the Pepto incident, and having minimal success.

It's all so freaking similar.

Trying to sleep when she sleeps, as if she's a newborn baby, but

failing because I'm a broken man who's been conditioned to anticipate the worst, at least where little girls are concerned.

Keeping a journal of every bathroom trip she makes because it keeps me occupied and it might come in handy.

Knowing she needs some Pedialyte to offset dehydration but being afraid to leave her to run to the 24 hour pharmacy. Considering bundling her up in the truck and taking her with me, then realizing that's not an option because she'll undoubtedly need to poop during that time.

Pacing around the cabin, weighing my options, not sure what the hell I should do.

The pressure in my chest diminishing somewhat when I realize she seems to be going to the bathroom less frequently.

Suggesting she try lying down in her bed to get some sleep and her practically demanding I lie down with her.

Resting my eyes with the kid attached to my side like a barnacle, and only allowing the current to pull me under the waves when I realize that the worst is over.

It's all so similar.

...I'm still calling out of work, though.